QUESTIONS/ANSWERS FOR THE BUS POP SERVER?

Brief summary:

There is a proposal to migrate several large lab divisions to their own POP server at CIC. BUS is one of the selected candidates. Presently, pobox1663 has over 2500 pop clients. It was recently upgraded to help speed it up. They are presently placing new accounts on beasley instead of pobox1663. beasley and pobox1663 mirror each other as far as accounts go. However, mail send to an account on pobox1663 will not be seen by the same account on beasley (If that seemed confusing, we got many much more where that came from!). There will be no additional charge for using our own POP account. The rate is still $15 per month and includes Meeting Maker XP services.

Details on machine to be BUS's POP Server:

Hardware: Sun Enterprise 1 with 64 MB RAM, 2 GB Hard drive, UPS (Uninteruptible Power Supply), data backed up nightly.

Software: Sun Solaris OS, same software as pobox1663, including vacation, pine, elm, standard Unix mail tools, and so forth.

Network: Connected to the network infrastructure via a FDDI (fiber optic, 100 Mbps as opposed to ethernet 10 Mbps) on the open partition (128.165.3.x, just like beasley and pobox1663), hostname will be bus-mail.lanl.gov.

When and How will the migration take place?

BUS Division's prioritization committee will determine the time frame of when and how. The server will be setup and available in about 2 weeks for testing by Brad Thurgood, John Lucero, and others as requested by BUS. After testing is completed, new accounts created in BUS will automatically be setup on bus-mail and not beasley or pobox1663.

The process of migrating a user from beasley or pobox1663 is as follows:
1) User, BUS administrator, or CIC creates a new account for user on bus-mail.
2) User, BUS administrator, or CIC modifies the EMR (E-Mail Registration database) to point their E-mail name (like johnboy@lanl.gov) to their new pop account via register machine (telnet to register).
3) User retrieve any mail still on old POP account to their local PC and transfer any files stored on old POP server to new POP server; Or, either CIC or BUS administrator can transfer old messages from old server to new server (This one is not for sure, but should be plausible).
4) User configures Eudora or E-mail package to point to new POP account on bus-mail (Settings should be: POP account: u<Z-Number>@bus-mail.lanl.gov, SMTP Server: {Should be blank, then it will use POP server, and if the person moves to a different POP server, only the POP account line will be changed}, PH Server: ph.lanl.gov, Finger Server: finger.lanl.gov).
5) User is now setup on new POP server.
What is going on with PH and Finger Servers?

The Hardware has been upgraded on both of those machines. You may have noticed that users are asked to change the PH Server to ph.lanl.gov and Finger Server to finger.lanl.gov. This is to allow for future flexibility and growth. Right now, they still point to lanl.gov, but in the future they could point to different machines and not configuration would have to be done at the client side. It would be transparent to the end users.

Account creation on new bus-mail server?

Account creation will not be changed. It can still be done via telneting to register.lanl.gov. We can give a list of people to CIC and they will setup those people to administrate all of BUS Division people as determined under EIS. Also, a new tool is going to be release called sudo. It will allow limited administration of user accounts like creating special E-mail forwarding files and things like that. Brad and John will be notified when that tool is available.

What about Hardware failures on the POP server?

CIC has a spare backup machine that would be put in place and restored from the last backup to look just like bus-mail while the original box is repaired. This spare is on site so there is no waiting time involved.

Will FTP still be supported?

Yes, it will be just like pobox1663 in regards to services and software available. /tmp is available for large downloads. Total disk space will start at 2 GB, they will increase it as needed without cost to BUS. The cost is shared by all POP users via the monthly charge (not per server). CIC does not foresee a rise in this monthly charge, unless a lot of expenses are incurred. Also, nfs (Network File System) is available for use by users (I'm pretty sure that the disk quota will remain at 5 MB for each user's home directory, but it will not apply to the /tmp area).

What about downtime and slow response experienced?

One of the main reasons for creating several POP servers is to speed up response time. BUS is only one of several large divisions that will have their own POP server under CIC. Also, some other groups will be sharing a POP server. Currently, 5 Divisions have been picked to be migrated to separate POP servers. BUS will probably always be on their own POP server because of our great utilization around FY end!!! Also, in an effort to speed up everyone's mail, internal e-mail traffic will be setup to stay local to the machine. Currently, mail that is sent from someone on pobox1663 to a joe_user@lanl.gov who is also on pobox1663 travels from pobox1663 to mailhost.lanl.gov back to pobox1663. CIC is working on modifications to the e-mail system that will keep that mail local, which will speed things up.

BUS is a heavy user of lists. CIC is planning to move the list server to BUS's new POP server. This will keep E-mail local and should not impact BUS's POP service speed. Of course, at this point this is still just a plan. And if it doesn't work out, then additional changes will be made to make it work on the BUS server or else where.

CIC also had some ideas for huge attachments that BUS people sometimes send to each other. The attachments could be placed on a common file server, or a Web Page for downloading as needed. Large attachments bigger than 1 MB to lots of people definitely slow the system down as there has to be a copy of the whole document for each person that is receiving the document. If it is sent say, Division wide, that could be 500 or so copies!!! That would be 500 MB of data that has to be copied to a hard drive and sent via the network. So, large documents should be sent to only people that really need them. Having the document some where where they can all retrieve it if needed.

I hope that this answers any questions, please let me know if you have any additional that I can add to this document. If I don't know the answer, I will find out.